1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

guilt, especially with regard to sex, produce the psychological disposition to sexual jealousy institutionalized in this community as well as in many other communities in rural Egypt? It is well known that in Egypt disputes over land, water and women rank as three of the most common causes of crime.[1] This does not mean that sibling rivalry and sex prohibitions are the only causes, but seem to provide the psychological field for the moral and religious values connected with fidelity and the propriety of sexual jealousy. A woman is identified not only with 'shame' but also with 'honour' and to preserve one's honour is tantamount to avoid exposure to shame.[2]

These attitudes, according to Kardiner, would also help to understand the dichotomy of sexes and to prevent sexual jealousies from coming out to open hostilities. They also appear to be one of the weapons of social equilibrium and of preserving in-male and in-female solidarity.[3]

Here it is also possible to give some satisfactory answer to the connection between the nature of the community and its demands on individuals as represented by sexual regulations. The central and principal quality in a polite (muaddab) or virtuous person is his conformity to the norms governing sexual behaviour; the flouting of which in any manner would condemn him as impolite and vicious irrespective of his other qualities. Morality and virtue are primarily connected with stringent sexual controls. The villagers, although envying the city dwellers their material comfort, deplore their moral laxity, e.g. women's emancipation in dress, love affairs, use of cosmetics, women's participation in men's work. In this community I heard of no cases of adultery or illegitimate children for the last thirty years, though cases of homosexuality and jokes about sexual pleasure from animals are not uncommon amongst the adolescents and young men. Stringent sexual controls are an essential agent for the maintenance of solidarity, the cohesion and the orderly living of a group with its puritanic religious code and its social organization based, among other things, on a clear-cut sex dichotomy.[4]

Whatever views may be held about the psychological problems connected with adolescence in Silwa, this stage is certainly the prologue to the full status of adulthood which is eventually attained by marriage. Marriage, after circumcision, marks the greatest ceremonial occasion in the individual's life. The best way of describing marriage conditions in Silwa is to give an account of a marriage ceremony which the writer

[1] Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] Cf. J. C. Flugel, *Men and their Motives*, London, 1943, and Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, where he writes: 'The ultimate source of the fear and guilt that lie behind all these reactions (of sexual jealousy) is the relationship to another potential man and it is derived from the boy's unconscious fixation on childish attitudes; it is hard for him to "picture" a woman quite apart from another man to whom she secretly belongs.' p. 483.

[3] A. Kardiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 476–7.

[4] See Margaret Read, 'The Moral Code of the Ngoni and their former Military State', in *Africa*, Vol. XI, 1938.